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East China Sea.

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NOTE

NATIONALIST CHINA - JAPAN: THE FIRST HIGH-LEVEL SINO-JAPANESE EXCHANGES ON CONFLICTING CLAIMS IN THE EAST CHINA SEA WILL TAKE PLACE WHEN CHANG CH'UN, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PRESIDENTIAL OFFICE, VISITS TOKYO EN ROUTE TO PRESIDENT PAK'S INAUGURATION. NATIONALIST FOREIGN MINISTER CHOW TOLD THE US CHARGE ON 22 JUNE THAT CHANG'S TALKS, COVERING THE SENKAKU ISLANDS DISPUTE AND POSSIBLY ALSO THE WHOLE OFFSHORE OIL ISSUE, WOULD BE "PRECONNAISSANCE" FOR DISCUSSIONS CHOW HOPES TO HOLD WITH FOREIGN MINISTER AICHI IN MANILA IN MID-JULY. THE NATIONALISTS HAVE MADE STRONG PROPAGANDA ASSERTIONS OF THEIR CLAIMS IN THE EAST CHINA SEA, BUT HAD HOPED OIL EXPLORATION COULD STILL CONTINUE UNDER THE INFORMAL AGREEMENTS REACHED WITH THE JAPANESE SINCE LAST NOVEMBER. CHOW ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT SUCH POLEMICS HELPED NEITHER SIDE AND THAT THE DISPUTE SHOULD BE MUTED. THIS REMARK REFLECTS NATIONALIST CONCERN THAT ADDITIONAL PRESSURE FROM CHINESE ABROAD, WHO WANT TAIPEI TO TAKE A STRONGER STAND ON THE ISSUE, COULD BECOME SERIOUSLY EMBARRASSING. IN ADDITION, TAIPEI BELIEVES THAT STUDENT PROTESTS ON TAIWAN AGAINST US AND JAPANESE ACTIONS RELATED TO THE ISSUE COULD DEVELOP INTO ANTI-GOVERNMENT DEMONSTRATIONS.

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